

Individual Report for Edward George Paul Edwin Jackson Brooks

Individual Summary: **Edward George Paul Edwin Jackson Brooks**
09 Dec 1848 - 1939



Sex: Male
Father: Charles Brooks
Mother: Sally Abbott

Individual Facts:

Baptism: 1848 in Sherbrooke, Québec
Birth: 09 Dec 1848 in Lennoxville, Quebec
Census: 1881 in Census indicates occupation as clerk
Census: 1881 in Census indicates religion as Congregational
Moved To Indian Head: 1882
Residence: 1901 in Indian Head, Assiniboia (east/est), The Territories, Canada
Vital: 1901 in Qu'Appelle, Northwest Territories
Residence: 1906 in Town of Indian Head, Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada
Residence: 1916 in 17, Indian Head, Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, Canada
Death: 1939
Burial: Indian Head, Saskatchewan

Shared Facts: **Helena Ermina Oughtred**

Marriage: 14 Mar 1876 in Lennoxville, Quebec
Children: Charles Brooks
 Harry Brooks
 Allan Scott Brooks
 Edwin Brooks
 Murray Gordon Brooks
 Bessie Brooks
 Ernest Brooks
 Arthur Brooks
 Mary Brooks
 Frank Brooks
 Sarah Brooks

Notes:

Person Notes:

Juror at the trial of Louis Riel, Regina, 1885.

Riel: A Life Of Revolution, Maggie Siggins, Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., Toronto, 1994.

"Among the panel of thirty-five possible jurors, two had French names; neither was chosen to sit. All six jurors selected - Francis Cosgrove, the chairman, Walter Merryfield, Henry J. Painter, Edwin J. Brooks, Bell Deane and Ed Everet - were Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Only Brooks, who had been born in Quebec, could speak French."

"Juror Edwin Brooks, a merchant from Indian Head, scribbled down notes during the trial, including a description of Riel:

A good-looking man, fair complexion, high forehead, wavy black hair, of medium height, full beard, like John the Baptist, sharp flashy eyes, small sensitive hands that twitch all the time and which he uses a great deal in talking, waving them around like the arms of a windmill. Like the half-breeds

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we know, he wore a dark, poor-fitting suit, open red flannel shirt and moccasins on his feet."

"Another juror, Edwin J. Brooks, left a description of the debate that went on. The jurors had been sequestered and closely guarded all during the trial. "Even if we went to the washroom, a Mountie went with us," wrote Brooks. "All we did was discuss, discuss, discuss":

On the subject of whether Riel was insane or not. We argued that back and forth for hours at a time. A couple of the fellows believed he was; but I couldn't agree, although there was a good deal of evidence against him on that score. He had twice been committed to an asylum in Montreal and some of his actions seemed to show him crazy, but his behavior in the court-room, the close way in which he followed the case and the sharp questions he put, proved to me that he was quite sane and of right mind.

We had hot discussions also as to whether Riel was entirely to blame or whether the Government wasn't just as much so.

Another difficult point was whether to recommend mercy. Some of the fellows wanted him hanged outright. I was strongly against that and in the end we were unanimous."

The Trial of Louis Riel - Justice and Mercy Denied, George R.D. Goulet, Tellwell Publishing, Calgary, 1999

"Riel's speech was a tour-de-force, one in which he had spectacularly preserved his self-esteem as a rational human being, but at a fatal cost. By an ironic twist of fate he had contributed to his own doom. His remarks made visibly clear to the jury that he was lucid, rational and sane, so much so that one juror Edwin J. Brooks subsequently told author William McCartney Davidson that Riel was no more insane than any of the others who addressed the jury."

"One of the jurors, Edwin J. Brooks, subsequently stated that while the jury had tried Riel for treason he was hanged for the murder of Scott."

"One of the jurors, Edwin J. Brooks, gave an interview to William M. Davidson, one of Riel's biographers, many years after the trial. Brooks stated that Riel was more interesting and effective than the lawyers who addressed the jury and that he was not insane. He added that the jurors would have liked the Minister of Interior on trial, for his "gross neglect and callous indifference", which incited the Metis to revolt. Riel, as previously noted, had asked for the presence at his trial of A.M. Burgess (Deputy Minister of the Interior) but neither his lawyers, nor Crown counsel nor the Magistrate did anything to have Burgess appear.

With respect to the jury's unanimous recommendation for mercy, Brooks stated that, "it was not an empty formal expression and it revealed the serious desire of every one of the six [the jury]".

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Brook's statement that the jury found Riel not insane and that the recommendation of mercy "was not an empty formal expression", contradicts the suggestion put forward by some commentators in certain circles. These commentators, including some in Parliament and the press, insinuated that the jury recommended mercy because they were unsure of Riel's soundness of mind.

In May 1999 the author of this text spoke to Mrs. Betty Hughes of Calgary, the granddaughter of Edwin J. Brooks, the same juror that had been interviewed by Davidson. She stated that her grandfather (who ran a general store in Indian Head, Saskatchewan in the 1880s and who died in 1939) was very sympathetic to the Native people. Her grandfather told her that when it was stormy he would invite the Indians to come into his store to escape the inclement weather. Mrs. Hughes stated that "he was ahead of his time in his tolerant attitude towards aboriginal people."

"Two jurors, Francis Cosgrove (foreman of the jury) and Edwin J. Brooks, as well as the anonymous juror (referred to in Chapter XXI from whose letter Liberal Leader Blake read to the House of Commons - who may or may not have been Cosgrove or Brooks), were sympathetic to Riel. Further, since each juror recommended mercy, one may surmise that all jurors were sympathetic to Riel. Consequently it does not stretch credibility to the bounds of disbelief to hypothesize that one or more of the jurors may have voted for Riel's acquittal if the defence plea to the jury had not been based solely on insanity. This is so particularly since Brooks and the juror who wrote the letter read by Liberal Leader Blake condemned the gross neglect, indifference and dilatoriness of the federal government representatives."